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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001487

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)
SUBJECT: UDPS STRUGGLING TO SAVE ITS FUTURE IN LATEST
GAMBIT: TSHISEKEDI AS PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

11. (C) Summary: Senior officials of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) have been quietly negotiating with representatives of both President Joseph Kabila and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba since DR Congo's July 30 first-round elections. They say talks with Kabila's People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD) regarding an endorsement in the October 29 run-off elections have been more encouraging. UDPS's major condition for an any alliance is the nomination of Tshisekedi as prime minister. It is doubtful UDPS will succeed in forming a coalition with either candidate. Current talks amount to little more than a last-minute gambit to preserve a role for the long-time opposition party. End summary.

12. (C) UDPS Secretary General Remy Masamba told us earlier this month that his party has been in touch in recent weeks with representatives of both Kabila and Bemba. He said that the purpose of these meetings is to discuss the possibility of UDPS President Etienne Tshisekedi endorsing either candidate in the October 29 run-off election. Masamba explained that because of the sensitivity of these negotiations, the UDPS has not issued any statements about the July 30 first round. He said that he and others in the party hierarchy are inclined to endorse Kabila, based two primary factors:

o First, Kabila is viewed as much more open to debate and the ideas of others. Masamba said Bemba, by contrast, is too rigid and unwilling to compromise.

o Secondly, Masamba said it is clear that Kabila's allies will control the National Assembly, and that Kabila will most likely win the second round run-off.

13. (C) Masamba claimed Tshisekedi has expressed some interest in forming an alliance, but had not yet committed to anything. Masamba stressed that Tshisekedi's endorsement is dependent on his being named prime minister. As prime minister, he said, Tshisekedi would bring instant legitimacy to Kabila's presidency and help overcome any regional or ethnic divides in the country. He claimed Tshisekedi's "huge popularity" among the Congolese would garner Kabila support, and naming him prime minister would be a justified recognition of Tshisekedi's long battle for democracy. Masamba said Kabila would also have to reserve at least three other "important" ministerial posts for Masamba himself, UDPS National Committee President Valentin Mubake, and political adviser Maitre Mukendi. If Kabila did not agree to these conditions, Masamba said the UDPS would continue to boycott the electoral process.

14. (C) Although many UDPS members apparently boycotted the July 30 elections, particularly in the Kasai provinces, Masamba said the UDPS would not necessarily have to tell people to go to the polls and vote for Kabila. The UDPS could simply encourage its supporters to continue their boycott, based on the idea that a low turnout of UDPS members ultimately advantages Kabila. Masamba recognized the inherent hypocrisy of having Tshisekedi issue an "order" to UDPS members to vote for Kabila. The party's insistence that its members did not register to vote in 2005 was the basis for its insistence on restarting the registration process, and telling people to vote would signal that there are, in fact, many UDPS members registered. Masamba made the claim to us September 21 that the UDPS represents 30 percent of the electorate.

15. (C) Masamba acknowledged that Kabila only needs a small percentage to defeat Bemba, and that naming Tshisekedi as prime minister would be difficult. Although the UDPS has no representatives in the National Assembly, Masamba said that the UDPS interprets the constitution as enabling any member of a party that is part of the majority coalition to become prime minister, regardless of whether it is represented in the Assembly. More importantly, Masamba said the job of prime minister would be difficult physically and mentally for Tshisekedi and that if Tshisekedi accepted the job, it could

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very well kill him.

16. (C) Comment. The UDPS gambled that elections would never take place, that the transitional government would collapse and the population would look to Tshisekedi as its political savior. The more pragmatic members of the party's inner circle, such as Masamba, realize how badly Tshisekedi

KINSHASA 00001487 002 OF 002

miscalculated. This gambit should be seen as a last-ditch effort by some of them to try to salvage what is left of the party's future. It is unlikely to succeed, and in fact may not enjoy Tshisekedi's endorsement. This would not be the first time that Masamba and others of like mind attempted to float a "moderate" compromise proposal seeking some kind of UDPS political role without Tshisekedi's backing. All have failed, sometimes due to Tshisekedi's own statements or actions. It is difficult to see Tshisekedi accepting some kind of role with Kabila, and it is even harder to see a majority of the National Assembly lining up to support Tshisekedi as Prime Minister. In addition, Kabila has little

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need to bring the UDPS into the fold with Antoine Gizenga's PALU (septel) and Nzanga Mobutu's UDEMO on board. End comment.
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